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G/TIP FOR MARK TAYLOR AND GAYATRI PATEL

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [SMIG](#) [AG](#)
SUBJECT: ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT EVOLVING ON TIP

REF: A. STATE 9008
[1](#)B. 07 ALGIERS 859
[1](#)C. 07 ALGIERS 931
[1](#)D. 07 ALGIERS 1099
[1](#)E. 07 ALGIERS 1777

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas F. Daughton;
reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: We received an immediate and unusually candid response on trafficking in persons (TIP) from the Algerian foreign ministry after delivering the UN.GIFT demarche (ref A). The MFA indicated that Algeria planned to participate in the forum. In addition, our interlocutor used the meeting to speak at length about Algeria's efforts to address TIP, and demonstrated an awareness of the issue while outlining Algerian plans to combat TIP. According to him, while the Algerian government may not have focused on trafficking per se, it has addressed issues linked to it, including by providing assistance to individuals in need and by prosecuting for criminal activity. The conversation was unique for its direct assessment of the TIP situation in Algeria, supporting our sense of gradual Algerian movement on TIP following the November visit of Ministry of Justice officials to the U.S. END SUMMARY.

GOING TO VIENNA IN FORCE

[1](#)2. (C) We delivered reftel demarche February 11 to Ahmed Saadi, MFA's deputy director for human rights and humanitarian affairs. Saadi told us Algeria would be represented at UN.GIFT Vienna, but was unable to provide a complete list of names. Algeria's inter-ministerial delegation to UN.GIFT Vienna will be headed by Lazhar Soualem, MFA's director of human rights, sustainable development, and international social and cultural affairs, and will representatives of the ministries of justice, interior, and employment. The DGSN (police) will also be a part of the delegation. Saadi also indicated that at least one Algerian parliamentarian would be present on February 12, for a pre-UN.GIFT meeting.

[1](#)3. (C) What should have been a routine demarche turned into a forthcoming summary of what Algeria is doing to address the TIP phenomenon. Speaking without notes and without the rancor that followed the release of the 2007 TIP report (refs

B, C, D), Saadi told us that an interministerial group had spent the past two months preparing for UN.GIFT Vienna. He stressed four points from the group's work: an acknowledgment of the seriousness of the issue for the international community; that Algerian laws will be changed to address trafficking in persons specifically; that changes in the laws will formally penalize trafficking; and that elements of existing Algerian laws already address trafficking. He also stressed that laws are being applied to deal with trafficking-related issues, though not specifically on trafficking because the concept does not exist in Algerian law. (In the Algerian mindset, Saadi maintained, trafficking is associated with slavery which, he said, does not exist in Algeria.) Saadi noted as an example routinely inspection of job sites by labor inspectors. When the inspectors uncover illegal activity like the employment of undocumented workers, he said, the individual responsible for the site is charged appropriately. Saadi readily acknowledged that such instances do not go after trafficking specifically, but maintained that they do address issues that may be linked to trafficking.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS OR TIP VICTIMS?

¶4. (C) Saadi indicated that he had had multiple conversations with members of the security services who informed him that they had seen neither cases of trafficking nor evidence of trafficking networks. (Note: This is the first time the Algerian government has suggested to us the security services are aware of the TIP phenomenon. End note.) However, according to Saadi, the security services readily acknowledge that there are illegal immigrants in Algeria. There are no specific government services targeted at trafficking victims, continued Saadi, but there are services available that trafficking victims can take advantage of, including centers for battered women and exploited children. Saadi was unable to say if trafficked individuals or illegal migrants make use of the services and acknowledged that they may not because of their vulnerable status. The challenge, he said, is determining the difference between someone who enters Algeria illegally, though voluntarily, and someone who is trafficked.

¶5. (C) We asked if the work of the interministerial group represented a change in Algerian policy towards TIP. Saadi first underscored that the group had focused solely on UN.GIFT Vienna, not TIP writ large, but went on to say repeatedly that the interministerial group recognized the international importance of the issue. He also said the Algerian government was nearly done with its efforts to amend Algerian laws so that they deal specifically with trafficking in persons. At present only "bureaucratic" issues remain, according to Saadi.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: On the surface, we continue to see a changed attitude from the Algerians concerning TIP (ref E). We are also beginning to see glimpses of the government's inner working of the issue. For several months, we have been told that Algerian laws will be amended to address TIP specifically. Actual passage and implementation of legislation will likely be a slow process, although conversations such as the one with Saadi already represent a significant step in the right direction.

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